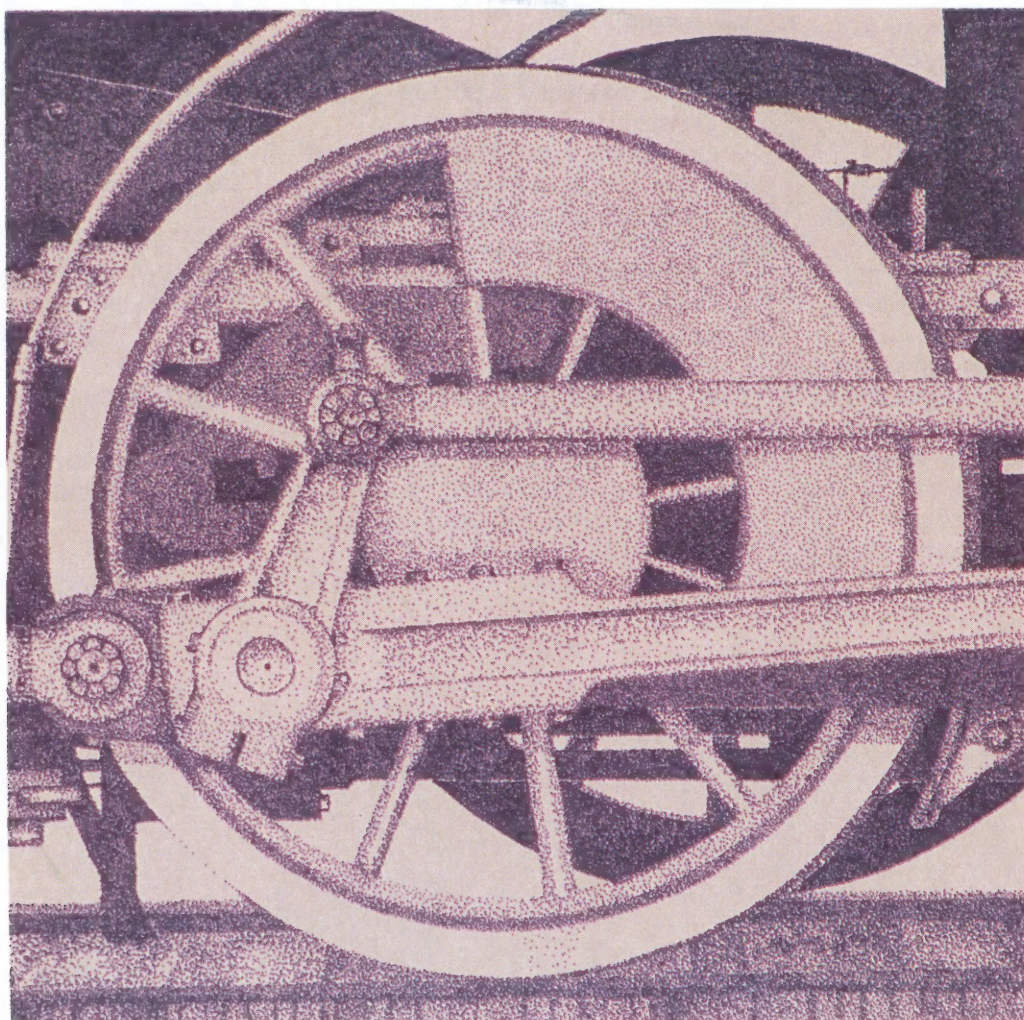


# C The Auburn CIRCLE

Vol. 17, No. 2

Winter 1992



## Where is Auburn Going?



### Plus:

Personal profile of retiring Art Professor Hugh Williams,  
two fiction stories, special full-color art Gallery,  
with an additional Gallery of photographs,  
along with a collection of other fine art works,  
photographs, and poetry.

## COLOPHON

This issue of *The Auburn Circle* was printed on 80-pound Potlach Mountie Matte paper by University Printing of Auburn, AL. All color art was photographed by the *Circle* staff. The journalism and fiction typeface is 11-point Palatino. Poetry is 11-point Avant-Garde.

*The Auburn Circle*, financed by advertising and student activity fees, serves as a forum for the writers and artists within the university community. It aims to appeal to a diverse audience by providing a variety of features and investigative journalism, short stories, poetry, art and photography. The *Circle* is published three times a year; fall, winter and spring, with an average distribution of 4,000 copies. The views expressed throughout the issue are those of the authors, not necessarily those of the publisher (the Board of Student Communications), those companies advertising in the *Circle*, the *Circle* Editorial Board and staff, Auburn University, its administration, student body or Board of Trustees.

## SUBMISSIONS

The *Circle* accepts works from students, staff and alumni of Auburn University.

Prose, poetry, essays and articles should be typed or legibly handwritten. All work is judged anonymously, so do not place your name on the pages. Submissions on computer disk are acceptable. The *Circle* has access to IBM and Apple Macintosh computers.

All artwork submitted remains in the *Circle* office and is photographed to reduced risk of damage. We accommodate artwork of any size and shape. Collections of related works by artists or photographers are accepted for our Gallery section.

All submissions become property of *The Auburn Circle* on a one-time printing basis only.

The *Circle* office is located in the basement of Foy Union down the outside steps of War Eagle Cafeteria, in the Publications Suite. For more information, call 844-4122, or write: *The Auburn Circle*, Publications Suite, Foy Union Bldg., Auburn University, AL 36849.

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*Playa de Gandía, Españiol*  
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# What's a Land Grant?

A series of articles and interviews  
by Dina Smith and Jake Adam York

## Both Ends of the Cow . . .

"Auburn's not going to attract Carl Sagan by doing research in cow [feces]," Walt Schnee, a senior majoring in history, said.

But Malcolm Smith, a sophomore majoring in poultry science, might argue that manure research benefits Auburn University. Smith said, "Those cows bring in a lot of money."

Which is more important? What should Auburn University focus on: research in agriculture and mechanic arts, or excellence in traditional academic fields such as the liberal arts? Or should the University even place emphasis of one over the other?

Auburn University Trustee Robert Lowder, in his letter to the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (January 9, 1992), outlined what he thinks is the proper role of Auburn University. In the letter, Lowder says that he feels Auburn has deviated from its original purpose as a land grant university. He states that Auburn should keep its past in mind when planning for the future.

In his letter to the *Chronicle*, Lowder describes the creation of Auburn as a land grant college.

Lowder cites Samuel Halliday's *History of the Agriculture College Land Grant Act of July 2, 1862* in defining the land grant institution as one which is created on lands given to each state specifically for "the endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts."

Auburn was created as Alabama Polytechnic Institute under the Agriculture Land Grant Act, along with other colleges such as Michigan State University, Rutgers University, Pennsylvania State University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the University of Georgia, the University of Florida, Louisiana State University and Cornell University.

"The land grant colleges and universities have made

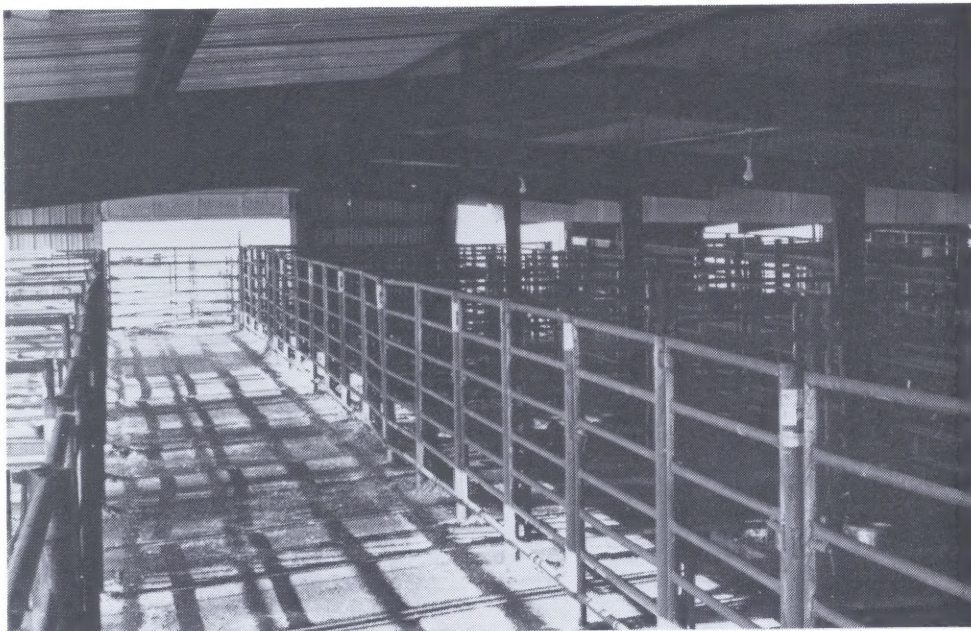


significant contributions to science," writes Lowder, "while expanding their courses of study and degree programs to include such practical pursuits as business, veterinary medicine, pharmacy, architecture, and engineering."

To support his assertion that a land grant institution should focus on practical areas of study, Lowder quotes William Leroy Broun, a former president of the American Association of Land Grant Colleges and Universities and a former president of Alabama Polytechnic Institute (1882-1883 and 1884-1902): "Education that looks to culture alone, while attractive and elevating in its nature and refining in its influence, does not of itself qualify the recipient for active duties of life."

Lowder believes that the purpose of a land grant institution, and Auburn in particular, is to prepare its students for the active duties of life, beginning with the teaching of agriculture.

Lowder writes, "It is the function of the land grant university in general, and Auburn's function in particular, that serves as the catalyst for a substantial amount of the debate that is currently taking place at Auburn. Teaching has always been the fundamental mission of the land grant college. Instruction is also the foundation for the other activities: Research supports teaching, new developments and breakthroughs in the sciences, and greater understanding. Extension carries the technology to the producer and the consumer and promotes a better quality of life. The original extension services of the land grant colleges influenced and improved a variety of occupations and activities of life. I see Auburn's role to be that of a traditional land grant institution, providing essential teaching in the sciences and agriculture and serving as an institution where all of Alabama's citizens have an opportunity to obtain necessary skills to be productive citizens. It is my hope that Auburn University will seek excellence in this endeavor, but it is also my belief that, as a land grant institution, Auburn must serve as many of our state's



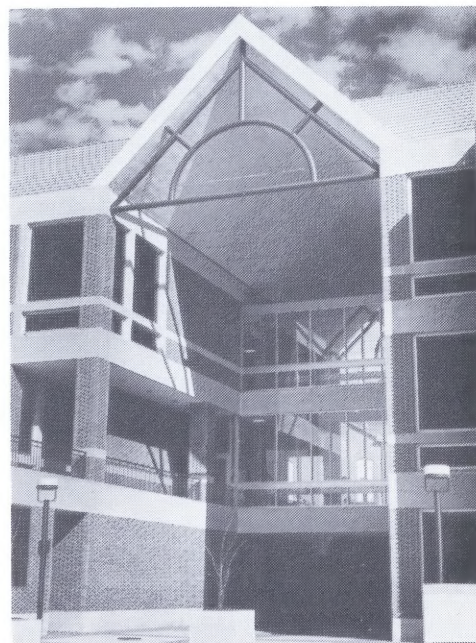
"The vision for Auburn is not shared by everyone within the Auburn University."

citizens as possible, regardless of race or economic position.

"This vision for Auburn is not shared by everyone within Auburn University. Some at Auburn apparently wish to see Auburn compete academically with Vanderbilt or Emory rather than serve the traditional land grant functions that Auburn has historically undertaken. The mission of Auburn University is really what is at issue."

Lowder goes on to say: "I do hope . . . that those who seek to improve Auburn University will consider the historic responsibility placed upon land grant institutions and find ways to insure that the citizens of our state who desire to improve their lives and the well being of our communities through a better understanding of agriculture and the sciences will find in Auburn University a means to those ends."

Finally, Lowder writes, "Let those who disagree with that view come forward and articulate their views, their reasons, and their perception of the history underlying those



views."

When asked about the question of the role and mission of Auburn University, Dr. William Muse, Auburn's new president, responded, "It is the most basic question to ask about the institution. It is not easy to answer for several reasons; the role evolves over time and broadens as the needs of the state increase. The specific definition is different for Auburn today from 1900 or 1950, [and in the year 2000] will be beyond what it is today."

"The responsibility of a land grant school is to respond to the needs of the state as those needs change. A

(Continued on page 7)

# Cow of a Different Color

## *An Interview with Dr. Trish McAdams*



*Dr. McAdams was formerly at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas; She had been Head of Auburn's Department of Theater since Fall 1991.*

**Circle:** What do you think of Auburn in the terms of a "research" and "land grant" school? Are these terms restrictive?

**McAdams:** The idea of a land grant university is a wonderful one; it's like rural electrification. It's opened all kinds of wonderful doors for all sorts of people, an opportunity not just for educated people to reach out to the population of the state, to a particular area, but an opportunity for exchange of information.

**Circle:** When you were considering coming to Auburn, what did you think of it in terms of education? Did you think of the land

grant, the engineering program?

**McAdams:** I thought of the football team, because that's the most visible, and there's nothing wrong with that. It's a really important part of who we are, because it gives us a lot of ready-name recognition.

**Circle:** What are your hopes—what do you see happening with the future of liberal arts in Auburn, with the land grant's original purpose as the promotion of agriculture and the mechanical arts?

**McAdams:** Liberal arts will not disappear, bottom line. It cannot. In the humanities and social sciences, you

cohesive manner, being able to . . . put things together, organize material, and in turn communicate to somebody else either through writing or speaking. I think that liberal arts is really the core of all of that.

**Circle:** In his letter to the *Chronicle*, Lowder writes, "Some at Auburn apparently wish to see Auburn compete academically with Vanderbilt or Emory . . ." and speaks of "various spokespersons who want desperately for Auburn University to become a 'Harvard of the South.'" Do you feel that Auburn tries to copy the big name schools?

**McAdams:** . . . I've not been to an institution, worked at a college yet that has tried to emulate or imitate somebody else. But most institutions, at least the ones I've [worked] with, have declared and determined who their constituency is, and what they need to do to attract primarily that group of people, and to service them adequately . . . to do that in the most effective way. And it's not [because we] certainly might not call another institution with a good core curriculum or some other program that we might admire and study and find out how it set up and how effectively it works.

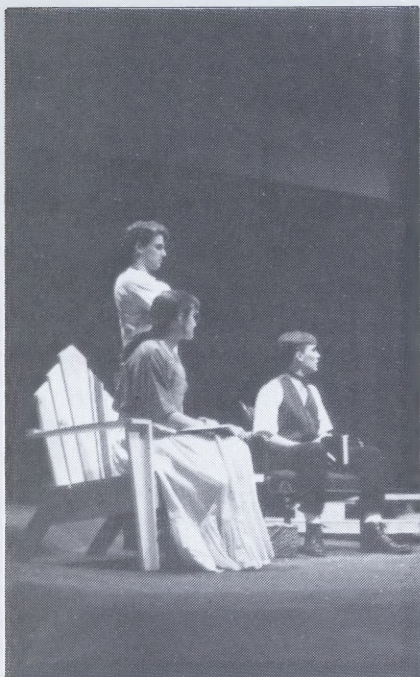
**Circle:** When you think of the "role" of a land grant college, and the "role" of Auburn, what comes to mind—what do you see as Auburn's "proper role?"

**McAdams:** Commitment to the education of the students; first of all the undergraduates; second, those who are enrolled in graduate studies. The student has got to be the focus. That does not mean that there

"The idea of a  
land grant university  
is a wonderful one;  
it's like rural  
electrification."

have the core of the university. Auburn has just acknowledged this by the instigation of the core curriculum. I have taught at several schools that had core curricula, and this is the finest designed one I have ever seen.

Communication is really what we're all about. We have to learn how to communicate effectively through writing and thinking, and that involves the ability to read with intelligence, to think in a logical,



aren't other concerns, but that is the first focus. The second one is to acknowledge the responsibility we have to the state and to the people of the state—the extension services (and I'm not privy to the way this operates)—the exchange of information.

**Circle:** Which would you say is more important: our history as a land grant institution, or what is happening today—or do you feel that both are equally important?

**McAdams:** That's why we study history. You study the past to understand the present and predict the future.

For example, in the theater, an actress [must learn] all she can about [her] role: [the character's] background, where she comes from, what her family is like, etc . . . create as much of a biography for the character as possible—and then forget it. Clearly, you don't forget it, because once you've created it and put all that together, it still exists in your mind; and that's your history.

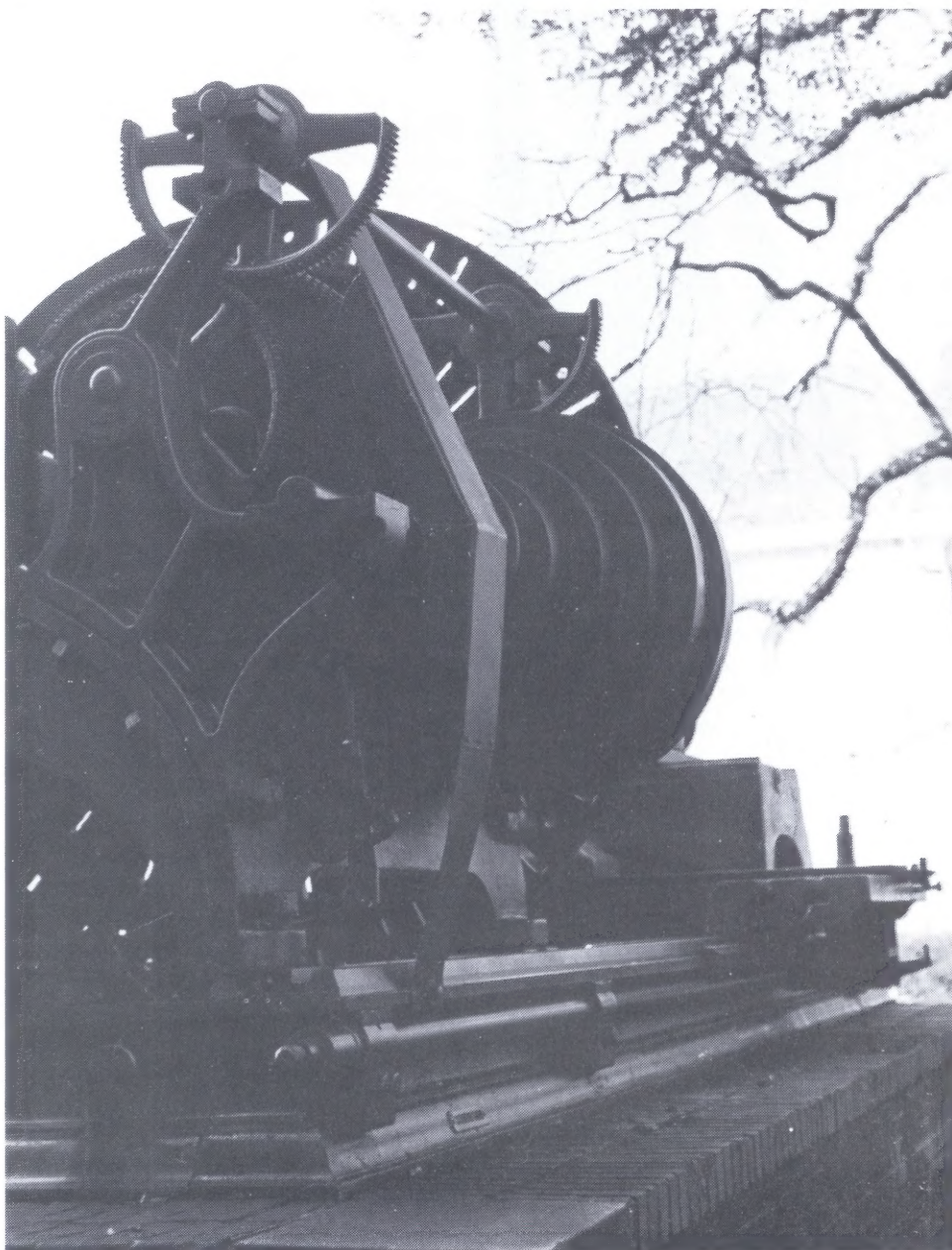


### *Both Ends (Continued)*

land grant university is an instrument of the state and federal government to help each state address problems."

Dr. Tibor Machan, an Auburn University philosophy professor, stated (in an interview with *Circle* staff member Franklin Harris) that Auburn University is not solely an instrument of the state. He said, "[Auburn's] mission is to educate students for their purposes, not to educate students for some 'master plan' of Alabama. These students are not by-products; these are not resources; these are individual human beings with their own lives to live."

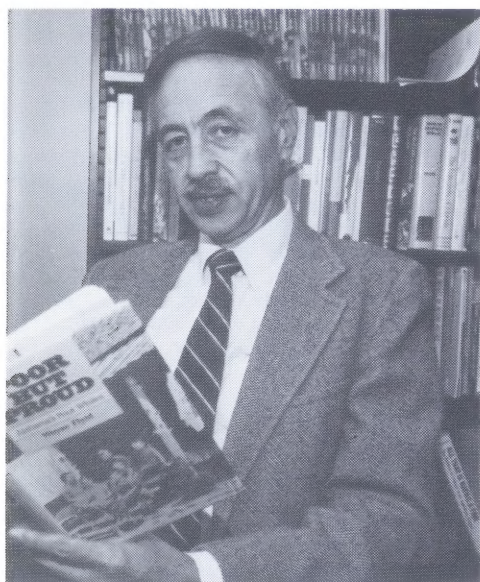
Dr. Muse, though familiar with the concept of land grant schools, having had extensive experience at Texas A&M, said, "It would be very presumptuous for me to attempt to define [the role of Auburn] at this juncture. We will address a process for looking at the role and the mission of Auburn now and into the 21st century—what kind of university we want Auburn University to be into the year 2000 and beyond, what kinds of programs . . . This is a question about which the faculty, administration, trustees, students, and alumni have a great deal to say."



# What's a Land Grant?

## Cow Tipping . . .

*An interview with Dr. Wayne Flynt*



*Dr. Wayne Flynt is a University Professor, former head of Auburn's History Department, and recipient of numerous teaching, writing, and academic awards.*

**Circle:** What do you think should be the focus of the university? Should the university have a focus? Should it be primarily on agriculture? Science? Mechanics?

**Flynt:** Its focus is self-defined in its own description: it's a comprehensive university, a comprehensive land grant university. It had multiple functions, and a lot of this has to do with the changing role of agriculture in American society. If you go back to the Morrill Act in 1863, 90+percent of Americans are farmers. If you create a university in 1863 with a primary focus of fostering agriculture, you're asking that that

be fostered in an environment where it affects everybody, just about everybody. If you reduce the function of a land grant university to agriculture in 1992, you're basically affecting fewer individuals.

**Circle:** Lowder says in his letter (see page four) that Auburn University should serve as an institution where all of Alabama's citizens have an opportunity to obtain necessary skills to be productive citizens.

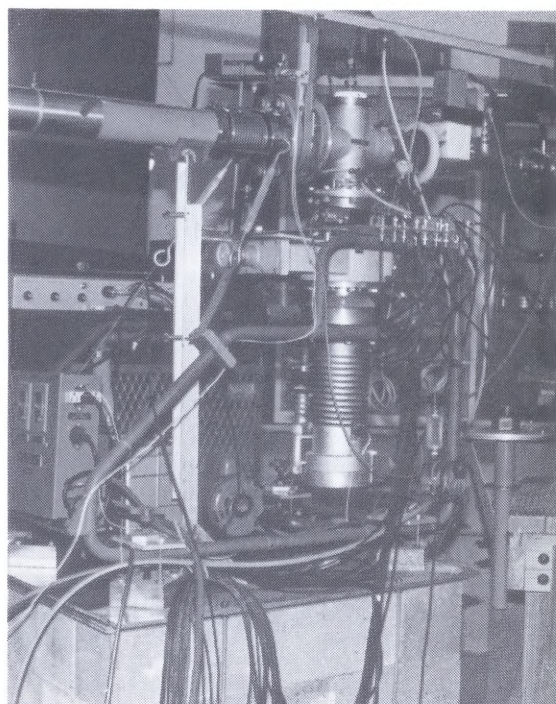
**Flynt:** There are numerous points on which Mr. Lowder's views and mine coincide. I certainly think it should be a university that reaches everybody in the state. However, when it was first begun, it certainly didn't serve the needs of the typical Alabamian. So, in other words, if we look at Auburn as a traditional land grant university back in the 1870s when it was begun, it didn't reach far more than half the people in the state, because it didn't allow women in, and it didn't allow blacks in; therefore, it [was] certainly not designed to do what Mr. Lowder said.

Now, if you pick it up in a modern period, I think he's absolutely right. Today's university isn't the traditional Auburn University, which was anti-black, anti-female.

**Circle:** Lowder talks about what he calls "practical pursuits," which he defines as being agriculture, business, mechanic arts, and related science fields. He pushes the point that the emphasis should be agriculture and mechanic, but what role do you think the liberal arts play in the education to make students productive

citizens?

**Flynt:** First of all, I'd point out that the article is entirely inconsistent. In fact, there are numerous inconsistencies in Mr. Lowder's article. One is his constant reference to point out the practical education and his quotation of the original scheme of the land grant university to focus on agriculture and science. Another point in his article cites wonderful land grant universities which are a credit to the land grant tradition and which take second fiddle to nobody in higher education—universities like Cornell, Michigan State, and then he talks about the Southern land grant universities: University of Florida, University of Tennessee, University of Kentucky, Louisiana



State University. And if you check those universities you will notice that none of them are like the ones he cites. So I'm not sure what he wants. Does he want the traditional land grant university that has no disciplines excepting engineering, business, agriculture? And then he talks about other practical disciplines, but I'm not sure what he means by that.

I can tell you that there are an awful lot of businessmen in 1992 who say that the most practical discipline in a university is foreign languages. In a global economy competing for international markets, a businessman in the 21st century who knows Japanese will be in a much better situation than one who knows agriculture and engineering. An engineer or agronomist who knows Japanese would be far more successful in the 21st century than someone who has neither of those skills without the language. So I would say probably if you want to say what will be practical in the 21st century in an international global economy, information-age kind of world, that the most useful tool at Auburn University would be foreign languages.

I would also argue that almost anybody can function in the modern world and get by without knowing something about political science,



**"I can tell you that there are an awful lot of businessmen in 1992 who say the most practical discipline in a university is foreign language."**

political administration, public administration, or history, not to mention geography. I view history as just as practical to a farmer, to an engineer, because history, philosophy, and English teach you how to write, communicate, and to put all that in context.

The challenge that I would pose to Mr. Lowder is that he and the trustees be committed to putting our academic programs in the top ten as judged by anybody's evaluation of education in the United States.

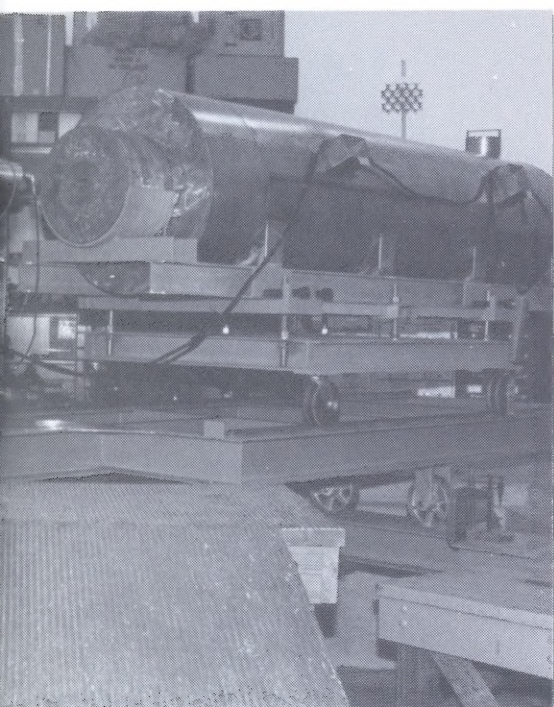
If I could see that kind of commitment, I would be pleased. Otherwise, I presume, our leadership is more committed to top ten football teams than top ten academic universities. And if so, they ought to say that right out. They ought to say, "Mediocrity is our desire in academics, but excellence is our desire in football." Then a lot of people could make choices, including a lot of our

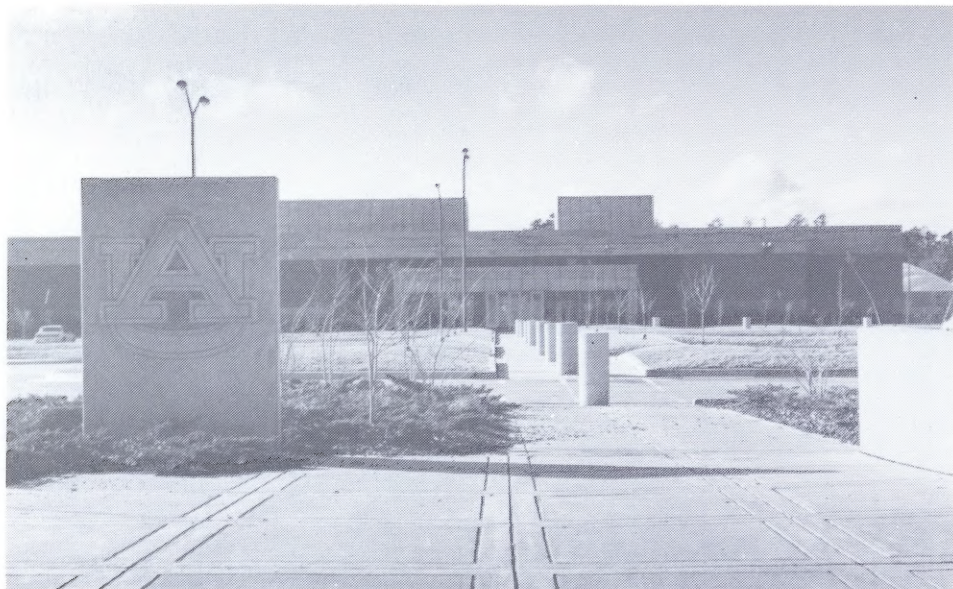
students, who would choose to go someplace else.

*Circle:* Lowder also mentioned in his letter that Auburn is termed a "research university." To what extent is that term restrictive?

*Flynt:* It is very restrictive, and I would disagree with his analysis, too. You start off with the assumption that a land grant university is three things: it is research, it is teaching, and it is extension. And there are very few universities in America that are as committed to extension as land grant universities are. That is one reason why I am very proud to teach at Auburn, because a land grant university has the assumption that we will take education to the people, that we will take it off the campus, we will take it into the community where people live. And the most exciting teaching I do is not teaching here at Auburn, although I teach a full load here at Auburn, but teaching to community groups of adults in small towns and rural areas of cities around the state. It's basically adult education.

I would argue that we ought to strive for a university where extension and research and teaching are all three equally important in hiring, equally important in retaining people of the faculty. And luckily, for the first time in my lifetime we are in a market where that's not impossible.





You can recruit somebody who is a wonderful researcher, who is going to publish, who is going to be at the cutting edge (to use the cliché) of his or her field. You will find that same person fully capable of teaching well and committed to extension work if you want that kind of balanced person.

**Circle:** What does Auburn need to do over the next five or ten years?

**Flynt:** We need a better dialogue between the faculty and administration. We've had ten years of controversy and confrontation that needs to stop, but I would hope that Dr. Muse would involve the faculty more in the process of decision making.

# The Idea of the Land Grant University

*Essay by Dr. Charlotte Ward, physics professor*

*"With a B.S. in Industrial Chemistry from the University of Kentucky, the M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from Purdue, and a thirty-year teaching career at Auburn, I am wholly the product of the land grant system, as was my mother before me (home economics, UK, '23) and three of my four children after me (Michigan State, Wyoming, and UK, for the third generation)" — Charlotte Ward*



The land grant colleges were, as were all colleges, originally, primarily, undergraduate institutions. I believe the first commitment of Auburn (and in fact all land grant schools) should be to provide the best possible undergraduate education to every qualified student in the state who wishes to attend the land grant school. This has traditionally been done by keeping the tuition low and providing financial aid. It has also been traditional to admit promising students with weak academic backgrounds and bring them up to college level by offering remedial courses. This was necessary because small schools could not offer the mathematics, languages, and science needed for college work. Some land grant colleges have had an "open admissions" policy (not Auburn in my time). But I know of none with a guaranteed graduation policy; students who could not do the work demanded, even with remediation, failed and left school. Alabama Polytechnic Institute traditionally had excellent undergraduate programs in the sciences,

agriculture, and engineering, as well as military science and history, thanks to Professor Petrie.

Early in my tenure here, it seemed that the common opinion was that the time had come for API to become a complete university, and the name was changed to reflect this. Undergraduate curricula in English, languages, and other former "service departments" began to produce graduates as good or better than the older liberal arts colleges. About the same time, chemistry, physics, and mathematics began offering strong graduate programs leading to the Ph. D. Auburn was becoming a university in fact as well as in name.

Enrollment shifts at any university reflect the job market. Fewer students today seek degrees in agriculture; more enroll in the business school. Business schools were certainly not mentioned in the original land grant mission statement, and some may think this is an inappropriate addition to Auburn. Nevertheless it has been our fastest growing school in recent years. (Come to think of it, the mission statement

I would like to see more dialogue between the faculty and the trustees. I think it would be wonderful if Mr. Lowder would debate Eugene Clothiaux [President of the University Senate] on campus about his vision of the land grant university. Mr. Lowder insists that he doesn't mind talking about this in writing, but he doesn't want to come talk about it on campus. That's amazing, that a trustee with such strong feelings would not want to talk to faculty about that and have the faculty talk back.

I do not understand why Mr. Lowder would not want to have a debate here on campus. Does he not want to hear what the faculty has to

say? If his opinions are well founded and well researched and well reasoned, then he shouldn't be afraid to discuss them in the oral forum. So let him come to Auburn and debate this. In fact, let's invite the Alumni Association, let's invite the trustees and the faculty and the students and let's have a debate between Mr. Lowder and Professor Clothiaux on the nature of the land grant university. It would be very helpful.



doesn't mention the football thing either.) Auburn today provides many programs not envisioned for the old A&M colleges of the 1870s. But this is 1992, and Auburn is trying to provide what students in the 90s need now.

The perennial, continuing problem at Auburn has been inadequate funding. State appropriations have not come near to keeping up with costs. Two sources have been tapped to make up the deficit: (1) Tuition has risen—not yet to the level of our neighboring land grant schools—but enough to be a barrier to some students Auburn was meant to serve. (2) As Auburn has aspired rightly to become a first-rank research university, it has had to look more and more to external sources of support for research. This has had two ad-

verse effects: (1) Professors who wished to carry on small-scale research programs while giving major emphasis to teaching have been almost shut out of research for lack of funding. Grants-in-aid from university funds are too small alone to support research in the sciences. (2) Persons who are able to get large extra-mural grants must devote most of their time to directing research and writing more grant proposals, leaving little time or incentive to teach undergraduates.

The big loser in this situation is the undergraduate student for whom the institution was designed in the first place. Classes become larger and larger, until, as a student remarked in a Chemistry 103 class meeting in Haley 2370 a few years ago, there were more people in that class than in her hometown! One professor calculated that if he gave each student in his classes ten minutes of individual attention, he would work a seventy-five hour week all quarter. Some students thrive in this atmosphere. Many just get lost in the shuffle. Some large classes are taught by the best teachers a department has, but some are turned over to whatever temporary instructors are available, some good, others not so good.

Someone remarked the other day that Auburn has always taken pride in doing a great deal with very little.

So we have. But no rubber band was ever made that wouldn't snap if stretched far enough. Auburn is stretched to the breaking point. I wish every departmental faculty would sit down and make a realistic assessment of what it can do well with the resources available and say with one voice to administrators and trustees: This we will do and no more. We have the people and space and equipment to educate 10,000 (or whatever number may be reasonable) students as they should be educated. When our resources increase, we will accept more students. Otherwise, they must go elsewhere or stay home. However, this won't happen, and the quality of education will keep going downhill.

Some land grant universities have become almost wholly graduate research institutions. These, in California, Massachusetts, etc., are part of strong state university systems in which other schools can take up the slack and provide excellent undergraduate education. If Auburn neglects its commitment to undergraduate education, where can young people go to find what Auburn used to offer? Nowhere else in Alabama!





**Opposing Page:**

Robert Bruce

*One Thing*

15" x 20"

Acrylic on canvas board

# The Beef of the Matter

## *Interviews with students*

**Wendy Hatcher, junior in exercise science:** People come here from all over the United States to major in things they can't get in their own states. The purpose of a state university is higher education for everybody, not just a select few; to give everybody the equal opportunity for education— from any state, not just Alabama.

**Jason Kunkler, sophomore in political science:** If they start new departments, they damn well better do it right— fund them equally with departments already in existence. There's no reason why Auburn can't have both agriculture/engineering and liberal arts; but they don't do them both well. They're doing a disservice to the citizens of the state.

**Randy Bradley, freshman in computer engineering:** I think the engineering and vet school are a very important part of Auburn. It's what we're known for. This school is pretty easy to get into; that's good and bad. If you didn't do well in high school, it gives you a chance to get an education, but it makes the school less competitive in national ranking. The tuition isn't high compared to most schools— we have a good ranking for that.

**Julie Bachman, senior in social work:** More and more people nowadays are looking for people with a liberal arts major. We pay taxes in the state, so people from Alabama should have top priority in admissions. Other states do this, too; why shouldn't we?

**Eric Spector, junior in psychology:** I think the liberal arts department is important. Lots of other institutions don't have the core curriculum that Auburn has. I think some of the requirements are unnecessary, but you still need a base in liberal arts. Agriculture is still extremely important: we still feed half the world.

**April Free, senior in mechanical engineering:** It's important for a mainly undergraduate school to be diversified in order to compete with other major universities. Postgraduate should be left to specialization; Georgia Tech is a good engineering school, but it doesn't offer anything else. Auburn is a good engineering school, but also good in business, education.

**Karla Odell, junior in nutrition:** They're going up on tuition every year— Auburn is notable for getting a really good education for less money. That reputation could decrease. We might lose people to other slightly more expensive schools that are more convenient.

**Jeffery Neaves, senior in psychology:** Liberal arts is important in order to get a well-rounded education. No one area should be perceived as more important than another. The majority of funding comes from the state; a good deal of the emphasis should be put on improving the state— Alabama is the brunt of a lot of jokes, nationally.

**Calvin Fort, junior in accounting:** I would like to see Auburn harder to get into— I'd like the name on my diploma to be as prestigious as possible, a quality in education with a good name. We should be more competitive in all areas and bring out top notch people— the people that can't afford private schools can still be the cream of the crop.

**Stacey Whatley, senior in visual arts:** They ignore the fine arts. We get no money, no tables, no desks, no bathrooms. I should be able to go to a state university and get an education in the major of my choice, and not be forced into a small private college. We have an excellent department and teachers, we just need more money. The quality is there, but Auburn just ignores it.





David C. Bass  
Above: *The Other Side*  
Left: *Sunlight*

# Let the Dog Get Some Peace

Fiction by Robert M. Pillot

The room was white. Every article, every detail blurred into an all-consuming, empty buff color. Even the sparsely hung pictures were swallowed. The photographs and drawings faded into a weak stratification of folded lines in the coldly pressed walls.

He rolled the sheets away, pulled his gown to his knees, and moved his legs to the floor. The ceiling tiles soaked up the slap of his bare feet. He picked himself up with the help of a stainless steel bar loosely mounted in the plastered wall. He inched his way across the room and opened the translucent blinds.



"Let her go," Dad told him. "Let her find her place, boy." But he didn't listen; he loved that dog. He'd played with Rossa all of his life, ever since he'd found her caught in a fox-trap in the woods behind the graveyard. He'd taken care of her, nursed her back to health. He'd fed her every day. There was no way he was just going to let her go. He followed her out to the rushing creek. Frogs belched, birds squeaked; the crawfish darted backwards through the clear water as the dog stepped in for a drink. Keeping her hurt leg out of the water, she dipped her black, wrinkled tongue in and lapped slowly, "Rossa!" he called, but the dog hobbled away, ignoring him. She crawled under a big, old oak tree, whose ancient roots, like the windows of a cathedral, arched triumphantly out of the soil. The boy approached the dog, but she wouldn't move. She just sat there, pitifully licking at her wounded paw. He cried and cried and the dog regarded him sadly beneath the tumor over her one good eye. He stayed with her that night, and Dad fetched him in the morning. They buried the dog under the oak tree, and carved her name in the largest root.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY TAE J KIM



Outside the window, the city's facade unfolded beneath him. Cement stacks billowed their complaints, dimming the eye of the sun. Flashes of red reached to him from the corners of the grainy streets. He stood high above all of this, framed in his window. The flags on the building tops waved to him through the heat rising from the pavement. Half-way there, he thought.

"Mr. Deckard!" cried the nurse, entering the room at her own leisure. She spoke like a grade-school teacher. "You shouldn't be walking alone like that! That's what we're here for."

"I'll walk where I want."

She turned and began changing the sheets on his bed.

"You'll be having visitors today, Mr. Deckard."

He looked back at her. She was bent over, her neck stretched like a turtle's so she could smile at him.

"Who's that?" he asked.

"Your son. He's flying in from Chicago," she said, straightening.

He was not elated. It only meant that another year had passed.

Has it been that long? he asked himself.



*He sat looking at the man who had brought him gifts every holiday and bright coins for his birthdays. This was the stout, jovial man who had a surprise and a story for each visit he had made. He looked upon the poor man, so rich in spirit, now pressed to his bed with the weight of years, the smile stripped from his face, the blade of the sickle at his throat. He looked away, to the memories which hung from the walls in black and white and faded paints: smiles and faces still bright beneath the dust that filmed*

*their frames. Grandfather smiled at him when he looked back, recognizing him.*

*He smiled also, and the room came alive beneath their stares. The tarnished trophies, long shelved, replayed victorious battles on the fields; the pictured teams resumed their positions to kick up dirt and sweat. Grandma was there, her lost smile returning with Zephyr's wind. Her picture sighed with content, her glowing cheeks showing relief as the shadows passed across her face. He did not know what time had passed, but the colors slowly faded from the animated room, and he knew that the wait was over.*



*"I'll walk where I want."*

He sat reading a torn copy of *War and Peace* he'd found in the room labelled "Library," though it more resembled a waiting room, with its puny glass coffee tables which held a meager collection of frayed magazines and water-logged novels. He'd read it once before, but a newer copy, missing fewer pages, had appeared one day.

A hesitant knocking sounded through the door.

"Buzz off, I'm reading!" he cried.

"Dad?" his son asked, entering the room with a nervous flip of his tie. His black suit was wrinkled with travel.

"Hey boy!" he answered, dropping the book to his lap and rolling the metal cart around so he could face him.

"You up for a day on the town?" his son asked. "I'm in town for business, but I thought I'd take a day off to see you."

"Oh, so it's not my birthday? That's mighty kind of you."

"Come on," he said, approaching. "Let me help you get dressed."

"I can dress myself."

His son stopped, then smiled and sat on the bed.

"We'll go have lunch at a French restaurant. I know how you love French food."

"I love France, too. Don't get to go there once a year."



"You're taking me to church today," his dad said. Dad struggled out of bed, leaning heavily on the light brown cane, his bony fingers wrapped tightly around the duck's carved bill at the cane's top. He protested, but Dad was insistent. At the service, the preacher's words passed through his ears, his eyes captivated by the revealing images within the house of God. Echoes of the speech vibrated his seat in rhythm with his father's scratchy breathing. The thick rays of the sun spread in vibrant color through the window's etchings. The scenes poured across the passive congregation as incense drifted from the altar. He heard Dad whisper prayers as the choir began their hymn and the organist pulled the stops to flood the church.

The world was dreamy as the doors opened, but the light ushered reality into the church. The wind of the organ faded, and the lungs of the choir relaxed. The breath that had directed his thoughts during the sermon had ceased. He called the preacher for his father's absolution.



There was no flavor in the fine food he ate, but he finished his plate anyway. His son spent the hour speaking of his sales, bragging about his business. He took little interest, but tried to look happy nevertheless. Finally, the waiter came with the check, and his son paid the bill.

He stared into the glowing wax beneath the flame of the candle and spoke.

"Take me home, son. I want to go home."

"But, Dad, the day's just begun. I thought you might like to go to a movie or something."

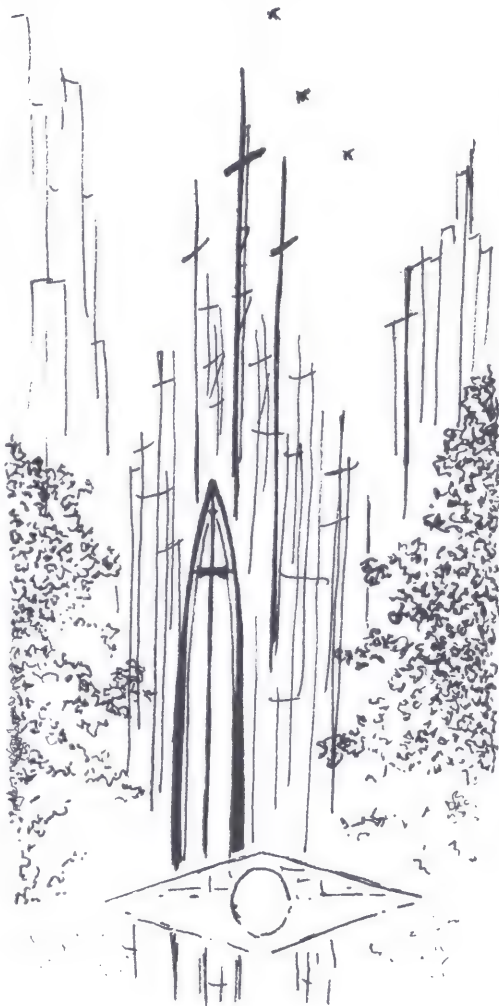
He fell quiet as they walked toward the dark grey sedan with tinted black windows.

His son drove, tapping out the rhythm to some happy song that spewed from the stereo. The city soared above them, oppressing everything within sight. His eyes caught a pigeon and followed its flight to a golden spire reaching high above the city's filth. The white stone was pure, the only color a vibrant reflection from the stained glass beneath a triumphant arch.

He beckoned his son to park the car, and they walked into the cathedral together. The still colors from the windows and candles encircling the shrines lighted the heavy silence within. They sat together in a pew; he looking hopefully to the altar, his son tapping and twitching nervously.

He began to whisper beneath his breath, but no choir sang; no organ played. No sounds but his own muffled voice and his son's stifled yawns. He looked to his son and smiled. His son looked confused.

With the help of his cane, he stood, bowed to the altar, then walked down the aisle. He limped outside into the faded world. He gazed towards the park across the street where the trees drooped over the browning grass. He dropped his head and began the hobble across the coarse pavement, catching his foot once in a hole and stumbling. His son started to help him, but he fended him off with a wave of his cane and picked up his pace. The cane slammed into the ground with each step, looking for support. His son followed slowly behind, letting the old man have his way.



*The headlights twisted with the car around the corners, cutting faintly into the thick mist that swirled through the forest. The yellow dashes on the asphalt appeared and disappeared like camera flashes. Then there were two, steady globes, frozen straight ahead, unmoving, reflecting the headlights faithfully until the Mustang pummeled into the body hidden behind them.*

*The deer wasn't killed, but its body had been shattered. He had to finish the job himself, alone. He had to cut the throat of that suffering animal. He pulled the car to the side of the road, and dragged the limp form of the buck into a thick gathering of pines. Using the flange of the tire-jack, he dug a shallow grave into the dew-moistened soil, laid the animal there, and covered it with what dirt and brush there was.*

*Afterwards, he sat in the car, watching mysterious shapes continually form and reform in the mists. As the sun slowly rose, the growing*

*warmth from the living ground dissolved the vapors; the forest came alive around him with the rhythms of bird chatter and animal noises, conversations unaware of what had taken place. Sleepless, he started the car and continued his travel.*



There was an oak tree by the park's stagnant pond. He dropped his cane and fell in place by the rotting roots. He leaned against the knotted trunk and kicked the decaying foliage away with his good leg. He rubbed his weak leg gently.

"Dad, are you okay?" his son asked.

"Perfect."

"Hey, you don't look well. Why don't I take you back?"

He stared up at his son, his eyes clouding over with tears. His leg really hurt.

"Go away," he said.

He wiped the sweat from his face with the back of his hand, leaving a smear of dirt across his forehead. He dammed the flow of tears by blinking his eyes rapidly.

His son crouched down beside him and looked at him silently, casually picking up hollow acorns and tossing them into the water.

He pressed his palms to his face, letting the warmth from his breath moisten his dried skin. Under the blushed darkness of his closed eyes, he imagined his surroundings. His breathing slowed to match his pulse, a monotonous throbbing in his ears.

Somewhere, his son was saying something, but he couldn't hear—he was listening to the bubbling water and the whistling birds, watching the dog find her place.



# GALLERY 1

A fourth-year visual arts major, Ken Sanderson is an Auburn native, long time host of WEGL's Mystery Playhouse '91 program and general agitator. He likes art, pop culture, Batman and hardcore punk.



*Untitled*  
28" x 36"

Mixed media and acrylic on canvas

"The combination of the four images is a response to the Gulf War, with enough ambiguity for people to draw their own conclusions. 'The Pep Boys' (Manny, Moe and Jack) are characters from an auto store up North, the gas station concurs, and the red figure is taken appropriately from a book of sectional anatomy." —Sanderson



*At War with the Pep Boys*  
5' x 5'  
Mixed media and acrylic on glass



*Untitled*  
Todd Van Ernst

## Waterford

by R.T. Smith

Lifted down from the guest parlor's  
shelf, Mrs. Lane's pitcher is  
light, a gleam

of cut facets  
that makes me tremble. Not  
the leafy Lismore

pattern, nor Asling's lotus frond,  
it is the simpler Clare,  
unswept wheat recalling

the artisan's blown stalk, its bell  
of stillness. All  
Irish, stressed from fluted rim

to medallion base, it  
centers the collection— Maeve  
decanter to the reed-seeming

vase of Kildare— as if  
to whisper: *forget famine,*  
*assassinations, Derry saracens*

*and the dole; beauty harbors*  
*here.* While my hostess fetches tea  
from the kitchen, I raise

the ormolu sideboard's glory  
and study its flawless  
polish with immigrant

glee. This impulse to pour  
that fills me— is it envy? Or  
reverence for a skill

I can never own? Calm now,  
I hold history's flow,  
fragile and dazzling

in my trespassing hands.



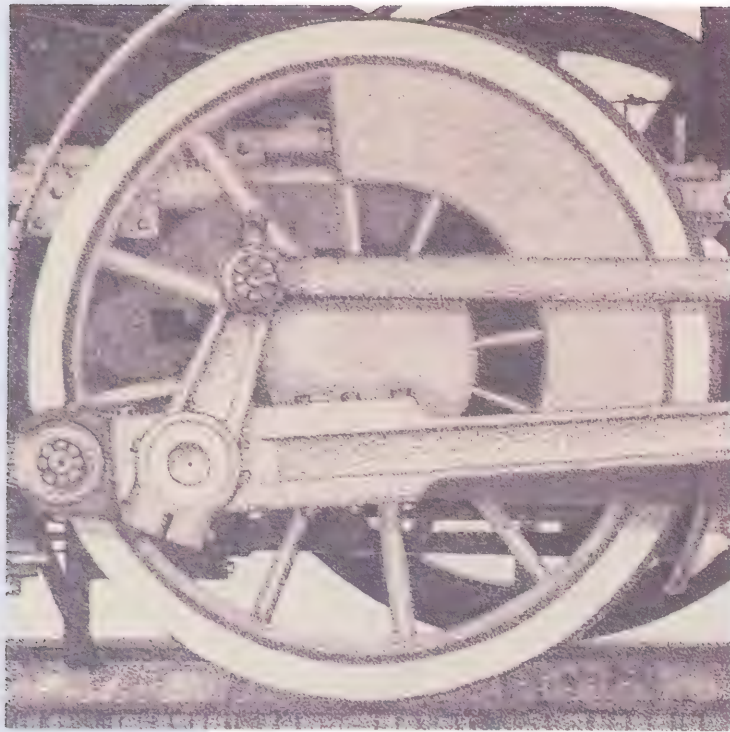
*Untitled*  
Brad Schild



Jennifer Taylor  
*Matchbook*  
15" x 22"  
Multi-media

Jennifer Taylor  
*Card Sharks*  
15" x 22"  
Multi-media

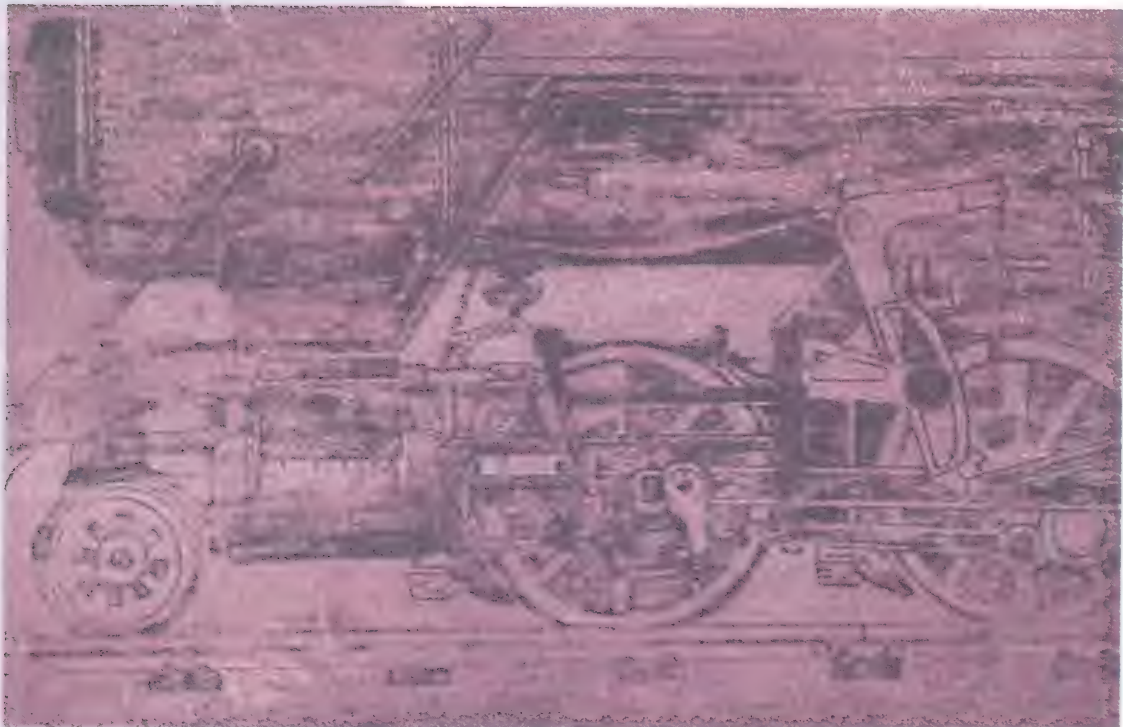




Tae J. Kim

Above: *Train Wheel*  
7.5" x 7.5"  
Pen and Ink

Below: *Hopes of Going Places*  
10" x 6.5"  
Etching



The death of a private man is generally of so little importance to the world, that it cannot be a thing of great importance to itself; and yet I do not observe, from the practice of mankind, that either philosophy or nature have sufficiently armed us against the fears which attend it. Neither do I find anything able to reconcile us to it, but extreme pain, shame, or despair; for poverty, imprisonment, ill fortune, grief, sickness, and old age, do generally fail. —Jonathan Swift

# Time Is Waiting To Explain

Fiction by R. Perrin Ehlinger



Christine fumbles with the cigarette as she sits facing the three students. The police are walking about, talking to people, taking notes, taking pictures. There is still sleep in her eye from when the telephone rang less than an hour ago. She picks it out of her lashes before she lights the cigarette.

"Do you mind if I record this?"



The sleet turned into a soft snow, visible only as a swarm of gnats under the streetlamp. The keg had run dry much earlier, so there were no visitors to the porch, or its one occupant, who was crumpled as a sack of flour on the frozen concrete. The party continued, unabated.



*Myrki, Lowell, 23. Died last night at approximately 1:45 am. of an undetected brain cyst. Originally from New Orleans, LA, Lowell was attending UNC, Chapel Hill, as a graduate student in advertising. He is survived by his parents, Richard and Janet Myrki, who are currently residing in Ashboro. The funeral will be held at 10:00 am. on Thursday, February 15, at St. Jude's Episcopal Church.*

COLOR PENCIL BY R PERRIN EHLINGER



**Q:** "Which one of you noticed him first?"

**John:** "That was me. We had parked in the back, so were cutting through the yard to get to our car. I nearly tripped over him."

**Q:** "Was he dead when you found him?"

**John:** "No, I thought he was drunk, so I tried to help him. He was burning up."

**Q:** "Is that when you realized he was sick?"

**John:** "No. We didn't— not until it was too late. Gary and I dragged him into the house and put him on the couch. Gary went to get him some blankets, and I went to fix coffee."

**Mary:** "I was sitting with him. He kept looking at me funny."

**Q:** "How do you mean?"

**Mary:** "Well, do you know that quizzical look? (Makes face) Kinda like Spock? It was like that. Then he started whispering, 'You know, I love her. Really. Will you tell her that?' He stopped talking after that, and passed out."

**Q:** "When did you realize he had died?"

**Gary:** "Not until I came back with the sheets. When I went to put them around him, I noticed he wasn't breathing. Hell, I really freaked out."

**Q:** "I can imagine. Is that when you called the police?"

**John:** "Yeah."

(Pause)

**Q:** "Did any of you know Lowell?"

**Gary:** "Not personally, no."  
(The others agree.)



Christine arrives at the rows of apartments and drives systematically through the aisles until she has found the right number. The

door is open, so she steps into its frame. The Myrki are within, busily packing Lowell's belongings. Mrs. Myrki notices her and invites her in.

"Hi," Christine says. "I work for the campus newspaper. We're planning on running a commemorative article on your son, and I was curious if I could interview you briefly."

As she asks the questions, she finds her attention drawn to the pictures left hanging. Women, rendered in pencils and inks and charcoals. The craftsmanship is excellent, the styles subtle and varied among the pieces. There are portraits, full-bodies, caricatures, even some tasteful nudes. Most are of the same person.

"Who was Lowell dating?" she asks.

**". . . he'd just look the other way and walk off, like he was afraid of me."**

"Nobody," Mr. Myrki replies. "At least, he didn't tell us if he was. To be honest, I was worried he wasn't interested in women."

"Richard!" Mrs. Myrki exclaims. "Really. He probably didn't have time for women, with that silly advertisement work."

"Well if he'd gone into medicine like we'd wanted him too . . ."

Christine looks to her list and chooses the next question.

"Was there anybody he had dated at length in Ashboro, or back in New Orleans?"

"There was one," Mrs. Myrki says. "Sweetest little thing. What was her name, Richard?"

"Brit. They dated for a year or so, if I remember."

"Is that her face he's drawn on the wall?" she asks, pointing.

"No. I don't know who that is."

She thanks them kindly for their time and departs.

At her house, she looks over her

notes from the interview. She has a list of the names of people who Lowell knew. She will have to talk to each of them to build a decent profile for the article. She will have to find out who Lowell was dating when he died, and interview her.

She pulls out her schedule book and begins sketching in tentative times for the interviews and meetings. She will have to talk to his professors, too. She makes room for them as well. And the funeral— that's only two days from now.

As she calls Matt, Lowell's friend, she notices her answering machine blinking, but Matt says he is free right then, and she forgets to see who has called.



**Q:** "How well did you know Lowell?"

**Matt:** "As well as anybody who knew him, I guess . . . That's not very well. He kept to himself, mostly."

**Q:** "Well, what sort of things did you do together?"

**Matt:** "We'd go to the movies. Whenever a movie came out by a director he liked, he'd ask me to go see it with him."

**Q:** "Why you? Did any one else come along?"

**Matt:** "He'd ask me because our tastes were similar. Ridley Scott, David Cronenberg, Martin Scorsese. A couple of others.

We'd talk about them afterwards over a beer. Usually it was just the two of us, but sometimes my girlfriend would come along."

**Q:** "Did she know him, too?"

**Matt:** "Not well, no."

**Q:** "How did you meet Lowell? How did you become friends?"

**Matt:** "That's a tough one. I don't remember exactly. I think we had a class together, and we probably hit it off talking about some movie

or other. Yeah, that's right, it was *Blade Runner*. That was one of his favorites."

Q: "Was Lowell dating anybody?"

Matt: "I don't think so, but then, he never did talk about his love life. He made one comment, a couple of years back; it was so hilarious I never forgot it. He said: 'If it weren't for these damned hormones, I'd be fine by myself.' (Chuckle)"

Q: "Did he date *anybody* while he was here at UNC?"

Matt: "Yeah, he did. Errin something . . . Hoder. Yeah, that's it. She was a redhead, that's how I remember her."



The newspaper office is empty when Christine goes inside. She spreads her notes across the table and sets her tape recorder to play. She sits flipping a pencil end over end.

"Wow. I haven't thought about him since I broke up with him, not until I heard he'd died, anyway."

The voice is difficult to hear. She should have placed the recorder closer. Increasing the volume helps some.

"It just kinda happened. We had some chemistry or something together. Pretty powerful."

She pulls a picture and a drawing from her collection of notes. The Myrkis had been kind enough to give them to her. The picture is of Brit. The drawing is one of Lowell's. They are not the same person.

"I broke up with him because he was a jerk. Not like an anal-retentive; he was nice and all. It's just that he never called me, and he'd always talk in riddles, and it just pissed me off. I knew I could do better than that."

Errin wasn't the girl Lowell had drawn, either. Funny that Lowell would find Errin attractive. Not that she was ugly—she was rather striking, but she did not seem like Lowell's type—not from what

Christine had gathered so far.

"I can't explain it. It was really confusing, like he didn't really know himself. I don't know. Confused me, anyway."

Chris puts the pencil down. She can't use anything Errin said, and considers not even mentioning her in the article.

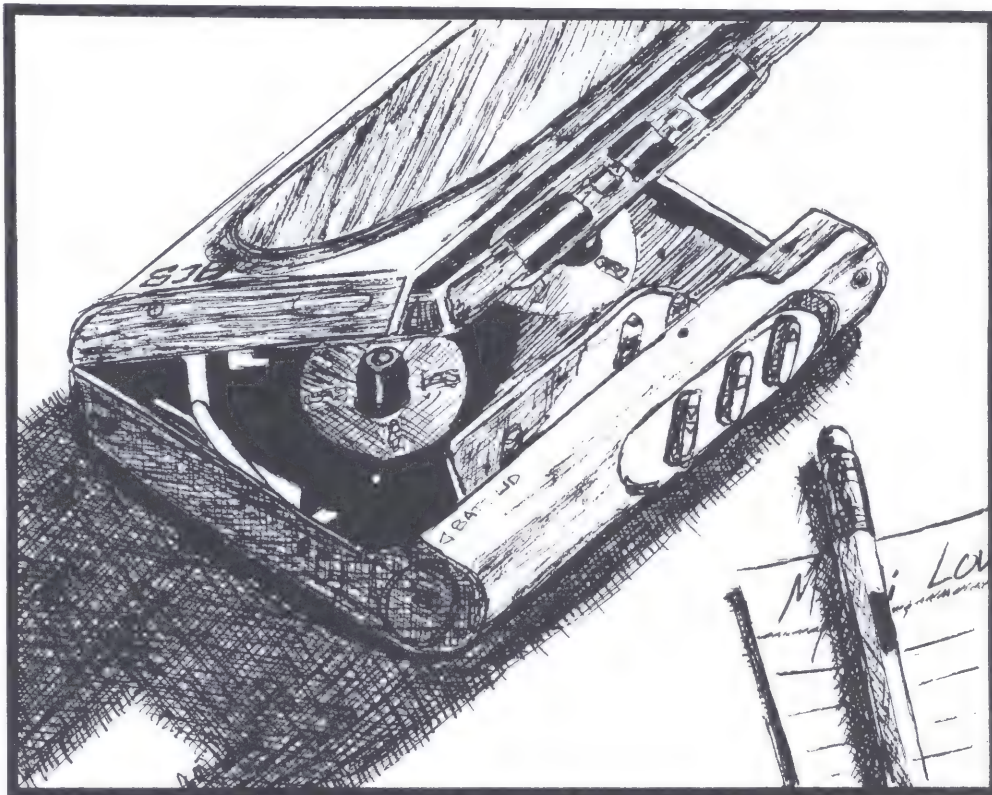
"No, we never talked again. I'd see him around on campus, but he'd just look the other way and walk off, like he was afraid of me."

*Hell, I would be*, she thinks. She pulled out Lowell's class schedule, putting marks next to the teachers she should talk to.

"Sum him up in one statement? What do I say? Gosh, he was really interesting, but it just didn't take off beyond the sex."

She wonders who will be at the funeral in the morning. Matthew should be. His parents. Brit probably will not be—she doesn't know how close they had been, but a flight from New Orleans is pretty expensive. Brit may not even know that he's dead; Christine hasn't had a chance to call her.

"Say it again. Out of sand. Tears on your face. Nothing stands. God only knows I've noticed you. Say it again. . ."



The interview had ended and the tape cut into some song that had been recorded previously. She turns it off.

She would have to tell her editor in the morning that the article might have to wait until the Monday issue. If this girl doesn't show up at the funeral, she'd have to track her down, somehow. If anybody had known Lowell well, it would be her.



. . . Dean's list for eight semesters during his five years at Chapel Hill. He graduated with honors with the class of 1989. Refusing several job offers from prominent nationwide firms, Lowell re-enrolled as a graduate student in pursuit of a master's degree in commercial advertising.



Todd's dumpy blue Toyota is parked in front of her house when she comes home. He is waiting on the porch for her.

"Where have you been?" he calls, standing up. "I've been trying to get in touch with you for the past couple of days."

"I'm sorry, Todd. This article came up Sunday, and I've got to have it done for Friday's paper."

She opens the door and they go inside. She offers him coffee, but he refuses, so she fixes a cup for herself.

"You could have called, at least," Todd offers.

"Hey, look, I'm sorry. I'm really pressed for time right now."

"Can we do something tomorrow, maybe?"

"Sh--!" she screams, spilling the coffee down the side of her jeans.

"No! I've got this article and I've got classes. I'm tied up till Friday. Can't you wait till Friday?"

"That's all that matters to you, isn't it?"

"What?" she asks, wiping a towel fervently over her leg.

"This newspaper business. That's all you have time for, isn't it?"

"Well it's damned important to me. That's not good enough?"

She throws the towel into the sink then grabs a diet soda from the refrigerator.

"What about me?" he asks.

"Man, Todd, can we talk about this later? It's late, and I have to get up early."

She pulls a chair from the table and falls limply into it.

"No. I think we should talk about it now. I've been patient, I've waited around. Can't you even find the time to talk to me?"

"Look, maybe if you had something to do with your time you wouldn't waste it waiting around for me."

"That's really nasty, Chris."

"Nasty, huh? It's the truth. I'm living my life over here and you just hang around like I'm some damned toy or something. 'Can you come over to play, Christy?'"

"Well, maybe we should just end it. Is that what you want?"

She slides the drink to the side of the table and leans back in the chair.

"Todd, that's not what I'm talking about."

"Really?" he says, picking up his coat. "That's what it sounds like to me. You get your rest. I'm out of here."

"Fine. Go."

She locks the door behind him and goes up to her room, forgetting her drink in the kitchen. The darkness surrounds her in the bed; the distant sounds of passing cars leak through the walls. She pushes the covers off of her body and unbuttons her pajama shirt.



"Look, maybe if you had something to do with your time you wouldn't waste it . . ."

Q: "So you taught Lowell on several occasions?"

Jorle: "Yes, he was a dedicated student. It was a pleasure teaching him."

Q: "Do you recall which classes of yours he was in?"

Jorle: "Not all of them, no. I remember him being in a couple of my art studios, because the work he did was superb. Give him an airbrush and he'd give you a world. Simply wonderful."

Q: "Did you have any dealings with him outside of class?"

Jorle: "How do you mean? We weren't friends - I keep a distance between myself and the students. It was purely a teacher-student relationship. And as a student, Lowell was exceptional. he would ask insightful questions, his projects were turned in on time, and his work was, as I've already mentioned, extraordinary."

Q: "Is there any project of his that stands out in your mind?"

Jorle: "Yes, there is, as a matter of fact. I had given each student a company to represent, to come up with slogans and styles. I gave Lowell a glass manufacturer, and, good God, he turned in a whole portfolio. Pages and pages. One picture was of a fish-tank, with fluorescent saltwater fish and anemones and coral, and it said 'Another glass . . . wouldn't be as clear.' He had a problem with slogans, but the picture made up for it, and you got the point. Marvelous. I'll show you some of them."

Q: "I'd like that. Here, I have a picture. (Hands it to him.) Did he ever use this woman in any of his ads?"

Jorle: "No. Not in my class, but this is definitely Lowell's work. Do you know her? Maybe I could get her to model for my classes."



The funeral does not last very long. Christine stands apart from the proceedings, allowing the priest's words to flow over her. The air is calm, and the bright sun reflects off patches of snow that litter the dead grass.

The crowd begins dispersing, breaking into small groups as they walk back to their cars. She sees Matt with his girlfriend. He looks quite respectable in a suit. There are Lowell's parents, serene and stone-faced, talking among some people she has not met, relatives perhaps. She can see their lips forming flat smiles. She sees one face, standing alone. She hadn't noticed the young lady earlier. Chris walks towards her, studying her, but her back is turned.

"Excuse me," she calls out when she nears.

As the stranger turns around, Christine grabs the image and recognizes who this person is. Her

feet sink into the moist ground as she halts.

"Hi," she says. "You must be Brit."

Brit's shoulders are hunched, her arms interlocked.

"Yes. And you are . . . I don't believe we've met."

She apologizes and introduces herself.



Q: "When did you and Lowell begin dating?"

Brit: "I was only thirteen. We'd known each other from school, but he was a grade ahead of me, so we'd never really talked. But then, and it was about this time of year, too, during Mardi Gras, we sort of . . . discovered each other. It was the night of Bacchus—I remember that—but we didn't see Bacchus, we were in Metairie."

Q: "And the two of you dated for a while, I understand?"

Brit: "It could have been forever, but it was only a year. I mean, he was my first— (pause) Don't print that. But we were so young everything seemed so much more permanent, more important. I've had longer relationships since then, and probably better ones, but nothing changed me— changed us, as much as being together then."

Q: "So why did you break up?"

Brit: "Lots of reasons. He was moving up here, for one. Also, he wasn't very faithful, either. He never cheated on me, or not that I know of, but he was a flirt. He'd talk to anybody and try to get them to hug him . . . or kiss him, too. I would have blown it off if I were a little more mature, but I was real possessive of him— really infatuated."

Q: "Why did you take the effort to come here for the funeral? It's a long way from New Orleans."

Brit: "I know, but he was very special to me. We broke up, went our own ways, and really didn't

talk much after that, but I like to think that I was always his friend. I couldn't miss this. He knows I'm here."

Q: "Do you think his last words were about you?"

Brit: (Pause) "No. He dwelt in the past, sure, but not over me. We talked enough to get that straight. Maybe he loved me, but not like that."

Q: "Do you have any idea who it might be?"

Brit: "No. He never talked about the people he was dating. Even when he was dating me, he never talked to any of his friends about it."



...special," said Jorle, his art professor.

The identity of the woman in Lowell's last words remains a mystery to cap his intriguing and talented character. Brit, his ex-girlfriend from New Orleans comments, "He found a love for everyone his path crossed." The focus of his last love, however, may never be known by any but the one, private woman who received it.



She throws the paper to the desk.

"That editor butchers everything I do," she says, too loudly, and some of the class turns to look at her.

"It was beautiful," she continues, stabbing the page with her fingertip. "I can't wait to get a job



writing for a real newspaper."

The teacher finishes the lecture, and, as Christine leaves, she drops the paper in the trash by the door.

She turns to exit, but she sees her, the one in Lowell's pictures, walking away through the hall. She drops her books and takes off at a jog to catch up with her.

"Hey!" she shouts. "Hold up a minute!"

The girl looks at her, her face as clear as glass to Christine, but she turns and continues on her way.

"Yeah! You! Wait a second."

This time the girl stops, lowering her backpack down her arm.

"Uh. What is it?"

Christine halts abruptly before her, bending over slightly to catch her breath.

"Did you know Lowell?" she asks.

"Who?"

"Lowell Myrki?"

"Is he that guy in the paper this morning?"

"Yes, did you know him?"

"No. It was sad to hear about it, though."

Cocking an eyebrow, Christine studies her, scrutinizing her face, her features, her figure. If only she had one of the sketches with her to compare . . . but now she couldn't tell. Her memory of the pictures and the girl who stood before her were juxtaposed.

"Why?" the girl asks. "Is it important?"

Christine glances back to see that her books are where she left them.

"No. Never mind. I thought you were somebody else."



Shades of grey blurring, twisting, coiling into thick wires, splitting into strands of hair, glistening in wetness, pulling way. Staring into eyes, wonderful eyes, detailed eyes. Focused, penetrating, intelligent. The flesh is sharp, distinct. Crumpled lines, crevasses. Pain, compassion, empathy, laughter. Depth. The lips are a dark shade. Moist, relaxed, unmoving, unspoken. The face . . . turns.

*Question: Who are you?*

Christine awakes with a start, sitting up into darkness. The sheets are damp with sweat, and her hair is knotted. She forces a slow breath, lifts the sheets from her body to cool off. The rain knocks softly on the roof.

That face . . . she can only get back to sleep when she imagines it as herself.



## Ode to Juan Valdez

*by T. Franklin Harris, Jr.*

Crystal clear water bubbles  
Through dry sand. A subtle  
Alchemy transforms both;  
A reservoir of black results.

I lie nearby, the prisoner  
Of Sleep.  
But She cannot keep Her prey.  
The ebony elixir rejuvenates  
Me.

Another day lies ahead; come  
Nightfall, another battle.  
Thanks be to the  
Latin Merlin.

# Burning Kudzu:

## *An Interview with Professor Hugh Williams*

*By Jake Adam York  
and Karen Scarborough*

**"I think the exciting thing about retirement is that if I want to get up on Monday and paint, then I'll get up and paint, or I'll do something else, or I'll pack my bags and decide to go somewhere."**

**— Hugh Williams Feb. 7, 1992**

*Professor Hugh Williams, who joined the Auburn faculty in 1957, plans to retire from his teaching career at Auburn no later than June of 1992. The drastic change of lifestyle doesn't intimidate the New York-trained professor who plans to travel and do research.*



**Jake:** When did you first become interested in art and know it would become a big part of your life? Where did you grow up, and what impact did your environment have on your artwork?

**HW:** I grew up in Auburn. I have always been surrounded by art in my home, and I have always drawn and painted. I had known a black primitive artist and had watched his work and talked with him. That experience had a greater effect on me than anything else— not only the art itself, but listening to the stories and listening to gospel music had an influence on my art.

My father was a veterinarian and a member of the faculty at Auburn, so I was brought up to be a veterinarian. But, when I registered for the first time at Auburn, I signed up for a drawing class . . . and so I've been involved in art here ever since.

**Jake:** What is the most rewarding aspect of teaching here at Auburn?

**HW:** Seeing students who come from absolutely no experiences, no art courses in high school, and in many cases, have not even seen an original work. Observing them as they start as first quarter freshmen and watching them develop. It's beautiful to see this happen. I'm always surprised and astounded by the talent that comes to Auburn. This is especially true as most high schools have no art departments. But I guess that is the rewarding thing— to see a student who really has no idea what art is all about, grow and mature into a strong student.

**Jake:** Would you like to see extension programs from Auburn to increase the amount of art programs that are offered in the public schools in Alabama?

**HW:** Sure. I think anything that we can do in the public school or in the community to bring good programs to the state would be worthwhile. Certainly the educational system is not supporting the arts in the public schools. You have got to offer a child other subjects than science and math.

**Jake:** Would you say that the Lee County environment or the Alabama geography has some effect on the type of art that you create?

**HW:** Certainly, Alabama's geography affected my work as indicated in my series of kudzu paintings. I grew up

with kudzu and played in it (probably because we weren't supposed to as there were rats and snakes and all). We made caves in them and swung off of its vines. Up to the period of kudzu paintings, though, my art was mostly abstract.

**Jake:** What effect did your New York education have on your work?

**HW:** New York City was the major influential factor because I was a graduate student at Columbia during the height of abstract expressionism. New York seemed to be the real center of it. The local artists were always very generous to open their studios to student tours. A lot of times, we would meet and talk with them at coffee houses.

**Jake:** How would you describe your work?

**HW:** It's constantly changing. Some of my work deals with the obvious, like my kudzu pieces. I don't think that I'd call them abstract by any means. I'd say they're more emotional, more reactive to the subject.

**Jake:** Which medium do you enjoy working with?

**HW:** I don't know if I have a favorite medium. Whatever medium I hap-

pen to be working with at the time is usually most enjoyable. I find as much enjoyment drawing or painting or printmaking. I have worked with oil paints probably longer than with any other medium.

**Jake:** Do you feel that work you do for yourself is more rewarding than commissioned work?

**HW:** Yes, I would say that it is more satisfying to finish a piece for yourself. Certainly the idea of painting and knowing that you are reaching a different degree than before is very exciting.

**Jake:** Do you enjoy doing commercial work?

**HW:** No, I hate it (laughs). I hate deadlines too. Most commissions do not leave you alone. They may tell you they're not going to interfere, but there's always something that they want to control; I find it difficult to work under those conditions. I think a lot of times, unfortunately, art is considered to be a decoration of space and not as a piece of art. Another thing about commissioned art is the problem of taking away the creativity of the artist. We see examples of this even with the

National Endowment. They talk about giving us this freedom, but they take away that freedom when the art becomes political or shocking. When you put limitations on creativity, you stifle it.

**Jake:** I understand that your studio burned recently?

**HW:** Yes, in October, it burned to the ground. I had converted the barn into a studio/storage and work area. Everything was in the barn . . . the slides, the records—everything. It's pretty devastating. You think you handle it like everything else—pick up and go on. The drawings that burned that had been done in the 50s had never been shown. I was the only one to see the whole series. So, it's like a whole period was just chopped out of my life.

**Jake:** Has the fire had an impact on your recent work?

**HW:** Yes. From 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., I'm rebuilding a studio—that's how it's had an impact on me. I haven't touched a brush or anything.



# Snow Monkeys

by Chris Smith, 1990

Hot tub bubbles broke on your lips,  
Cracking the silence of nervous moments.  
Steam hazed my arms  
And water-filled ears.

The pool was best at a distance.  
Its icy calm waters tempted, drooling  
For our embrace.  
I hated extremes.

You rose from the tub a chakra  
Shade of red, bulging with wet mist and sweat.  
"What's going on?"  
"I want to get cold."

Wet footprints broke off at the edge  
And the pool laughed— consuming, reminding  
You how it feels  
To forget being

A baby doll without buttons  
Best at a distance from daddy, but not  
Quite far enough.  
Ice water makes you

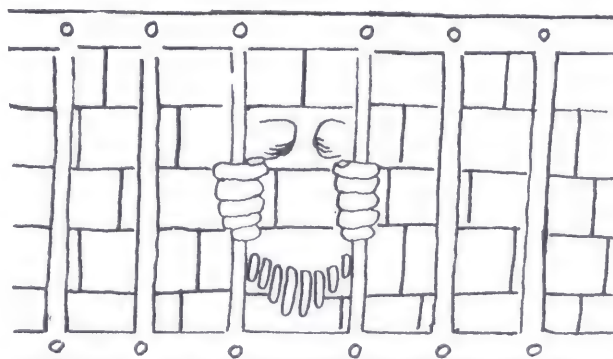
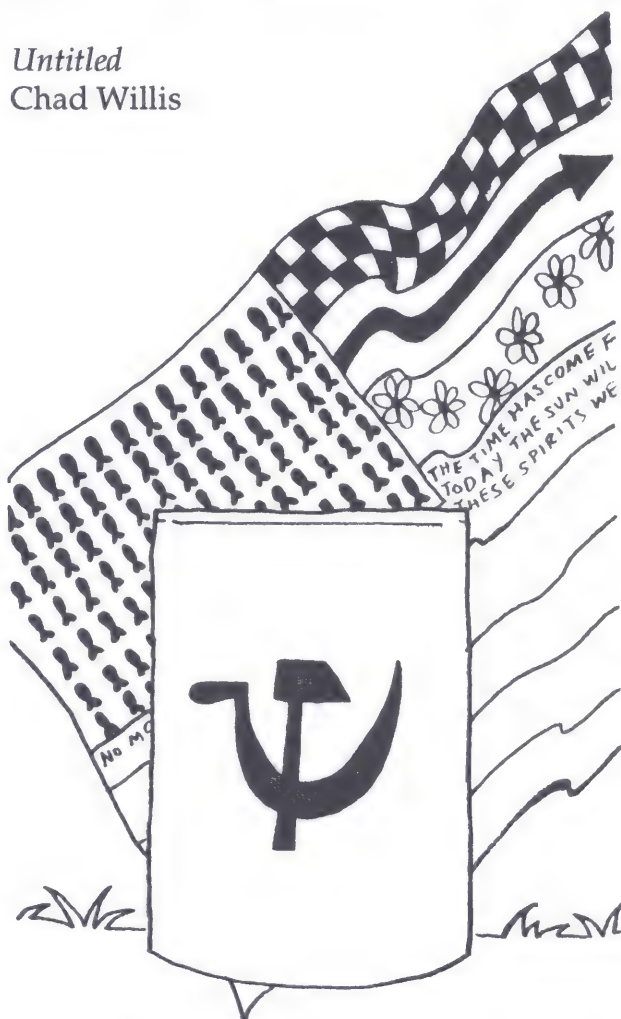
Tell me. I could see your pool bugs  
Swarming. If I could buy you off, make you  
Forget to swim  
In those baby clothes . . .

You rose from the pool a mood ring  
Shade of blue, shaking in teary stutters.  
"What's going on?"  
"I want to get warm."

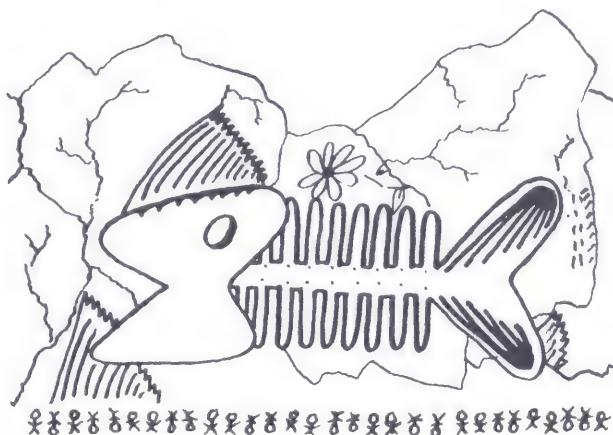
Hot tub bubbles broke on your hips.  
Pool bugs danced on the heat, climbing across  
Your slickened hair -  
Bugs for me to eat.

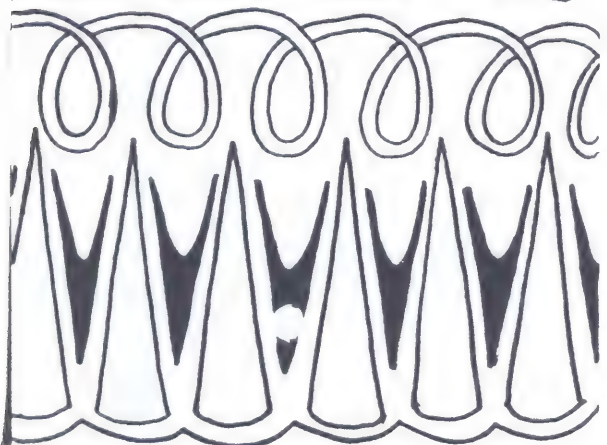
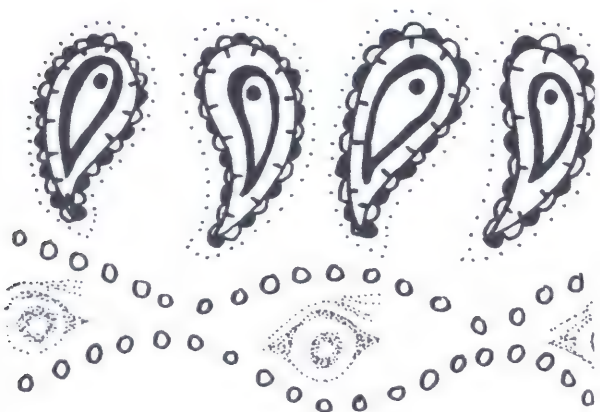
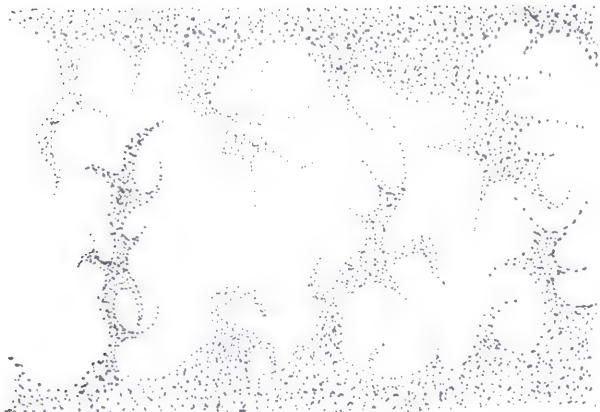
Broken by the night's extremes,  
You turned your back to your grooming monkey  
Weak— consuming—  
Bugs swarming in me.

Untitled  
Chad Willis



im so scared, please dont..





## Evensong

*by Jake Adam York*

When through vaulted woods  
at twilight go squirrels  
crozier-tailed below hawk-tailed rood  
to voice their vespers,  
and ordered ranks of owls  
sit in leafless choirs,  
chanting, dusk-cowled—

When plainsong echoes roll  
with leaves (psalming tongues)  
through wooded naves, and crows  
martyred in their murders call  
the evening prayer in a purple  
tongue while angels sing  
and spread the sunset pall—

When thicket twists and writhes  
beneath kudzu shroud  
with hunger like an empty tomb  
(a death which daily dies) —  
When copper moon, great rose  
window, rises through trees  
and gilds cathedral beams —

The hart raises his head  
(horns reach and claw the sky  
like ancient hands, grasping  
for cloud, star) hoping to pry  
the firmament and, through torn  
night, glimpse a heaven  
sung but never seen.

# GALLERY 2

## *Steps to a Coronary*

John Heredia is a fourth-year pre-medicine student majoring in visual arts. He describes his photographs as "pictures of a guy cheezing on a girl who's a southern belle."



*Heartburn*

*Palpitations*



*So, what do you say?*



## Darkside of a City

*by David Dyas*

Porch swing on a haunted street with  
calm, sullen eyes, They've watched  
so often, no longer surprised:  
Watching the madness go down

Cat fight over no real concern,  
deep, blood red and emerald green  
like nothing you've ever seen  
the feeling, it puffs and swells

Look on, if you can through  
those eyes that you know too well  
of the madness,  
the man-molded hell.

Can you feel that? in the  
balmy air? rising heat  
with sweat and despair  
it's steaming off the road.

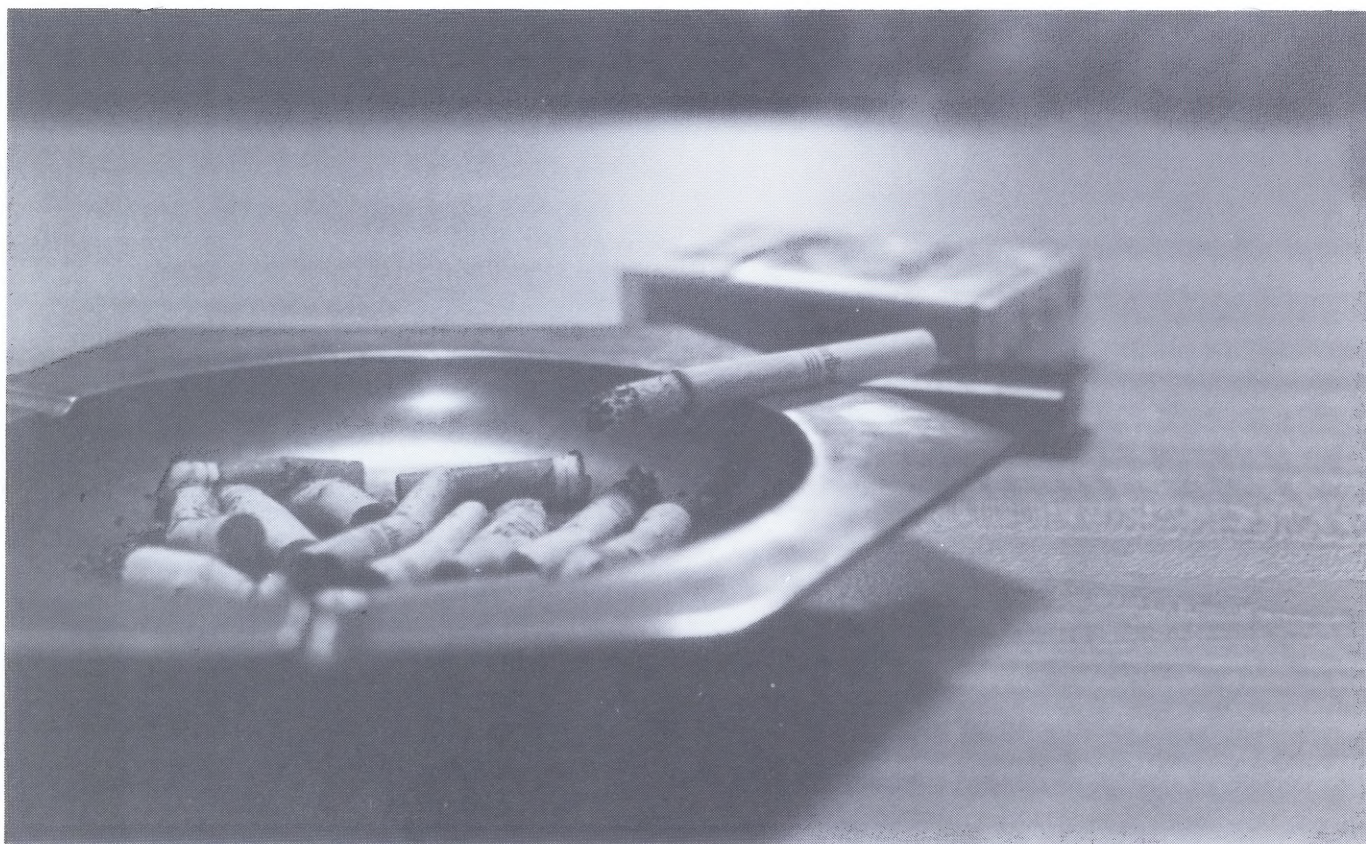
See these figures down  
the sidewalk rolling,  
Monkey grass in the cracks  
between:

Do you catch that feeling?  
Oh lord! it's RISING  
in the street, the mind,  
all the time

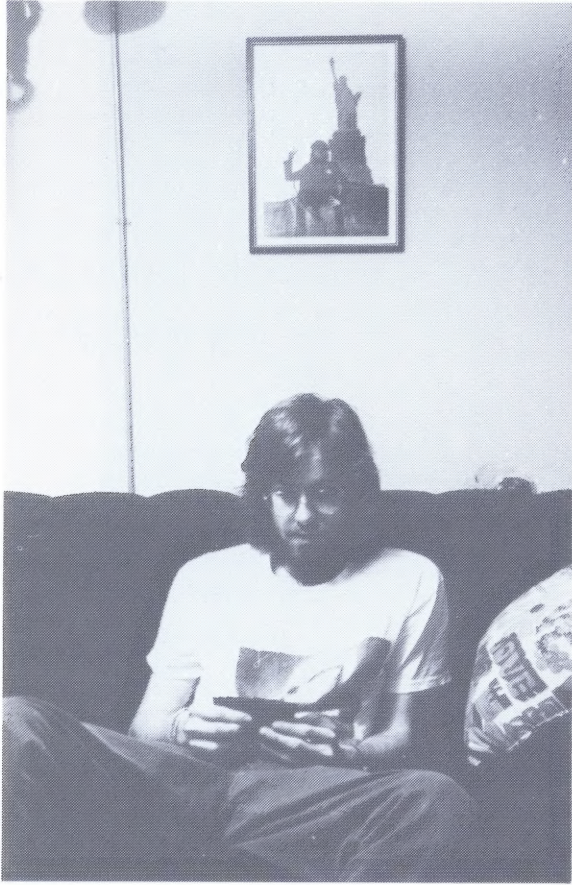
or is it just geography?



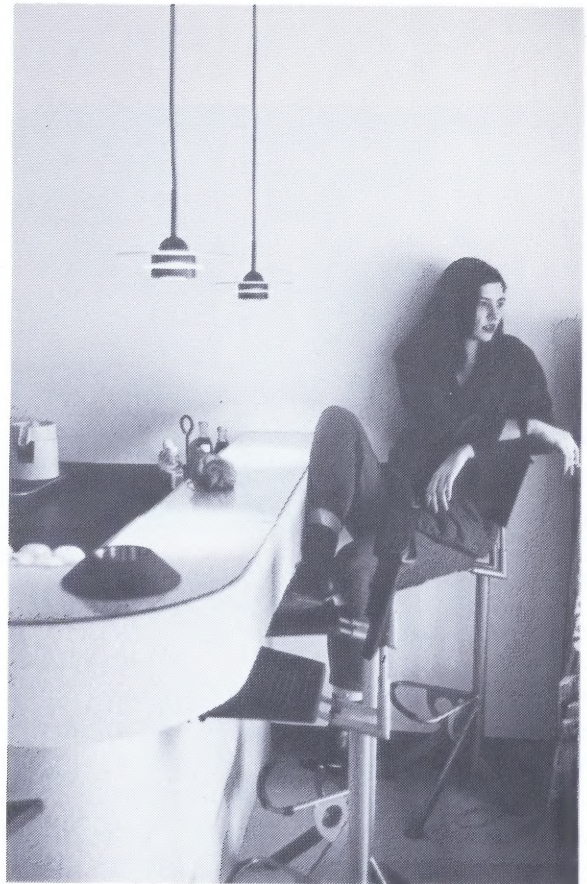
Todd Van Ernst  
*Untitled*



Rob Cheek  
*Untitled*



*Untitled*  
Rob Cheek



*Kim*  
Ruth Sanders

# CONTRIBUTORS

**David C. Bass** is a freshman from Hattiesburg, Mississippi. He hopes to enroll in the Architecture program, and enjoys listening to alternative music, taking photographs, and playing guitars. His roommates find him a bit eccentric.

**Robert Bruce** is a senior from Enterprise, Alabama and is majoring in Visual Arts.

**John S. Bruton** is an academically confused third-year student. Reliable sources have placed him in long-haired guitar-playing circles, and he has been known to frequent Grateful Dead concerts.

**David Dyas** is a sophomore from Mobile majoring in English. His interests are writing and music.

**R. Perrin Ehlinger**, a fourth-year student, is a struggling first-year architecture major. Hailing from New Orleans, he loves seafood and, well . . . feels uncomfortable with free time.

**Todd Van Ernst** is a junior in economics from Birmingham. His hobbies are photography, sky-diving, and bungee jumping.

**T. Franklin Harris, Jr.**, a sophomore in political science from Athens, Alabama, has been published in *The Freeman*, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer* and the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*.

**John Heredia** is a pre-med senior majoring in Visual Arts.

**Tae J. Kim** is a junior in the first-year of Architecture. From Columbus Georgia, Tae is studying Architecture and music in order to create better works of art. Also, he loves trains.

**Robert M. Pillot** is a shady character. A sophomore in Civil Engineering, Bob enjoys the Polish folk dance, skeet shooting, and raw venison.

**Ruth Sanders** is a senior from Jemison, Alabama majoring in Architecture. She enjoys life.

**Ken Sanderson** is an Auburn native and longtime host of WEGL's Mystery Playhouse '91 program. He likes Art, popculture, Batman, and hardcore punk.

**Karen Scarborough** is a senior in Visual Arts. From LeGrange, GA, Karen is a night owl who enjoys painting, drawing and music.

**Brad Schild** is a junior in Finance. His hobbies include photography, music, and hunting. He is in Alpha Kappa Lambda, and won the State Photo Essay award in 1989.

**R.T. Smith** is the Alumni Writer in Residence. He teaches poetry here at Auburn. His most recent publication is *The Cardinal Heart*.

**Chris Smith** is a graduate teaching assistant in the English Department and retiring editor of *The Auburn Circle*. He willingly admits that "Snow Monkeys" is the only good poem he ever wrote.

**Jennifer Taylor** is a freshman from Lafayette, LA, majoring in Nursing. She is hyperactive, a WEGL DJ, enjoys her sorority, and enjoys annoying people.

**Chad Willis** is an elusive contributor who enjoys scuba diving, poetry, art, and cycling.

**Jake Adam York**, from Gadsden, Alabama, is an idealistic junior majoring in English. As Fiction Editor for the *Circle*, Jake frequently enjoys paper cuts; his true passion is writing.

**Jessica Jones**, a graduate student from Hatcheechubbee, Ala., studies foreign language (Spanish). Her ambition is to stimulate an interest and love for other cultures

**Rob Cheek** is from Nashville, Tenn. He enjoys music, cinema and driving fast. He lives his life one day at a time.



**Deadline Notice:** The Circle is accepting submissions for the Spring issue until April 17.

# AUTHENTIC MEXICAN FOOD

## WEEKLY SPECIALS

🎵 Mondays 🎵  
**Mariachi**  
🎵 **Band** 🎵

Tuesdays  
*Buy One Meal  
Get The Second  
At Half Price*

Wednesdays  
**Margaritas \$1<sup>75</sup>**  
*(Pitchers \$7<sup>00</sup>)*  
**Mixed Drinks \$2<sup>00</sup>**

Thursdays  
**MEXICAN BEER \$1<sup>25</sup>**  
**DOMESTIC BEER \$1<sup>00</sup>**



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